



Did U Know?

Roger Bannister of England and Australian John Landy ran the first sub-four minute miles in a race at the Vancouver (Canada) Commonwealth Games in 1954. The event was the first to be televised live across the globe.

What to WATCH

TEN Sports

Pakistan vs England
First Test, Day Four
Live at 10:20 am

ESPN

Football Focus
Live at 5:00 pm

Sportscentre
Live at 8:30 pm

STAR Sports

ATP Masters Series
Live at 5:00 pm



TALK TURKEY



Steve Waugh

(Former Australia cricket captain)
"Ricky Ponting's doing well. It's a process, it evolves. You don't become a great captain straight away, you take your time, you learn your lessons, you make mistakes."



GP Cricket Corporate League SEMIFINALS

Beximco vs Gazi Tanks
Venue: FCS
Epyllion vs Acme Lab
Venue: DCS

CCL semis today

SPORTS REPORTER

The semifinals of the Grameen-Phone Corporate Cricket League will take place at two different venues today.

Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar-led Acme lock horns with Epyllion, guided by his national teammate Tushar Imran at Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Star-studded Beximco under the leadership of veteran Akram Khan will play against Khaled Mahmud's Gazi Tanks at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

All the semifinalists have already brought one foreign player to strengthen their side with eyes on the November 17 final to be held at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Kenyan batsman Steve Tikolo will boost the Beximco line-up against Gazi, who roped in Pakistani international Zahoor Elahi while another young all-rounder from Pakistan, Yasir Arafat, arrived here to play for Epyllion.

Although Acme tried to pull off an Indian star, they finally managed Pakistani Tareq Mehmood, who is a regular visitor to Dhaka.



MONEY TALKS: A smiling Mohammad Ashraful is leading a host of star signings for Premier League debutants Sonargaon Cricketers on the opening day of the inter-club cricketers' transfer at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Sonargaon arrive with a bang

Three-day inter-clubs players' transfer begins

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

After a lifeless four seasons, the transfer market exploded yesterday on the opening day of the three-day cricketers' inter-clubs transfer for the Premier Division Cricket League.

Any newcomer to the Bangabandhu National Stadium conference room would have been taken by surprise seeing a sea of cricketers gathering for the bourse, especially after totally different scenes in the recent past where clubs, cricketers and fans were indifferent about the coveted domestic competition.

The situation has changed mainly

due to the availability of the country's top cricketers, who were defied from taking part in the league for international commitments.

Although holders Old DOHS, Mohammedan, City Club, Bangladesh Biman reinforced their squads, it were Premiership debutants Sonargaon Cricketers who took the centre stage on Day One by signing a host of top-class players like national cricketers Moham-mad Ashraful and Mohammad Rafique and ex-nationals Naimur Rahman and Al-Shahriar.

The promotees made a dramatic entry into the stage with their fans bringing the new recruits through a procession and chanting slogans. In a

crowded room where it was even difficult to stand 15 cricketers signed for Sonargaon, much to the delight of the young organisers of the club.

Perhaps they were inspired by the success of DOHS, who lifted the league title on debut last year, to spend nearly one crore taka to form a strong team and challenge the heavy-weights.

Star batsman Ashraful said he was ready to take the challenge if he was asked to lead the team.

"When I was a spectator, big teams like Abahani and Moham-medan drew huge crowds. The situation is not the same now. There is little difference between big and small teams. That's why I chose to play for a team which I

will call new, but not small," Ashraful told reporters while explaining the reasons behind his joining Sonargaon.

"Usually, we show our mental weakness in international cricket and suffer against big names. This would be a nice opportunity for me to gain experience of playing against big names and utilise it on the international stage. If I can successfully take the team to a height, it would help my career. It is another reason for my leaving Biman," added Ashraful, reportedly the highest paid cricket this year.

"I don't know whether I am the

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Third day Trescothick's Half-centurion Butt keeps Pakistan afloat

Cricket

AFP, Multan

Salman Butt scored a second successive half-century to keep Pakistan's hopes alive in the opening Test against England here on Monday.

The young opener followed his first-innings 74 with a gutsy 53 not out as Pakistan reached 125-2 in their second innings at stumps on the third day after conceding a lead of 144. They still trail by 19.

Nightwatchman Mohammad Sami had yet to open his account when bad light stopped play with nine overs remaining.

Stand-in captain Marcus Trescothick earlier smashed a sparkling 193 to help England post 418 in reply to Pakistan's first-innings total of 274.

Inspired by Trescothick, England threatened to bat Pakistan out of the match before slipping late in the innings against the second new ball. Their last four wickets fell for 30 runs.

Seamer Shabbir Ahmed, playing his first Test since being cleared of a suspect bowling action, grabbed three of the last four wickets to finish with 4-54. He also completed 50 Test wickets during his 10th match.

Pakistan batted positively despite losing makeshift opener Shoaib Malik early in the innings, with Butt showing the way with a disciplined knock under pressure.

Butt, 21, added 93 for the second wicket with Younis Khan (48), who fell to a brilliant low catch in the slips by Trescothick off fast bowler Andrew Flintoff in the penultimate over.

Trescothick also had a hand in the first dismissal when he caught Malik (18) off paceman Steve Harmison.

Trescothick was also in the lime-light in the morning session, displaying immense concentration during his long stay at the wicket. He was quick to spot errors in line and length, hitting two sixes and 20 fours in his

305-ball knock.

There was just one false stroke in his long innings when he mistimed a sweep off leg-spinner Danish Kaneria, but substitute Navedul Hasan dropped the sitter at deep square-leg. He was then on 181.

The left-handed opener, who was on 135 in his team's overnight total of 253-3, played a key role in boosting

England after nightwatchman Matthew Hoggard and Kevin Pietersen (five) had fallen early.

England were then three runs behind Pakistan's total.

Trescothick continued to bat aggressively and was involved in a vital 93-run stand for the sixth

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Pakistani fast bowler Shabbir Ahmed sends down a delivery during the third day of the first Test against England in Multan on Monday. He took 4-54.

PHOTO: AFP

Eng U-19 team in city

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

With one eye on next year's World Youth Cup, a 14-member England Under-19 team arrived in Bangladesh yesterday on a month-long tour. They will play five limited-overs matches and a subsequent tri-nation series that also involves Sri Lanka.

The English officials including captain Varun Chopra told a press conference that their visit will help to fine tune the side before the Under-19 World Cup to be held in Sri Lanka next February.

"We are looking forward to the next World Cup in Sri Lanka and we must thank the Bangladesh board for creating an opportunity for us to prepare the team properly for the meet," said team manager John Abrahams, who is making his second visit after the 2004 ICC U-19 World Cup.

"We couldn't perform as expected on our last visit to Bangladesh but we believe this time our performances will help us later on in the tri-series," he said.

The tourists will face a second-string side (BCB High Performance) squad in the five-match series as the main Bangladesh Under-19 team are busy preparing for the Afro-Asian Cup to be held in India.

Coach Andy Pick was least concerned at the strength of their opponents but thought that it would be easy for his boys to get used to local conditions.

"We are not thinking about the opponents in the practice matches because our main focus is the tri-nation series. My boys' first target will be to get accustomed to the conditions in the first two matches. But the result is also equally important for us and definitely we try to win the matches," said Pick.

"Everybody has the potential to become a successful cricketer because we always try to pick the best ones for the Under-19 side. That's why I don't want to mention any particular name," said Pick when he was asked whether they had any future prospects in the squad like Alistair Cook, who was one of the stars of the last World Youth Cup.

Varun Chopra, the Indian-born England Under-19 captain, said they set a target to win all the matches.

The visitors will play five limited-overs matches against the hosts on November 17, 18, 21, 24 and 25 at three venues. The chosen venues are Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra, BKSP in Savar and the Khulna Divisional Stadium.

After that the Sri Lankan U-19s are due in the capital on November 29. The triangular series will begin with the Bangladesh-England match at the BKSP on November 30. The teams will play each other three times in the league phase. The final is billed for December 14.

SQUAD
Varun Chopra (captain), Chris Thompson, Michael O'Shea (vice-captain), Ben Wright, Moeen Ali, Nicolas James, Greg Wood (wicketkeeper), Robert Woodman, Richard Jones, John Simpson (wicketkeeper), Andrew Miller, Aaron Shingler, Karl Brown and Rory Hamilton Brown.



England Under-19 coach Andy Pick (C) addresses a press conference at the Hotel Sonargaon on Monday. The English youths are on a month-long tour of Bangladesh.

PHOTO: STAR

Another BCB wicket to go?

SPORTS REPORTER

There were whispers in the cricket arena on Monday that another top official of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) had submitted his resignation.

The speculation was ripe that BCB vice-president Aziz Al Kaiser Titoo had followed in the footsteps of Reazuddin Al Mamun -- the board joint-secretary and media committee chairman who called it quits in protest against a 'secret deal' between president Ali Asghar and Aston Moore.

When contacted Titoo said that he had not submitted any resignation letter to the board president, but also did not rule out the possibility of doing something similar if a few issues like the controversial TV deal remain shady.

"Honestly speaking, I am looking forward to the next board meeting to clarify my position. I will definitely raise some burning issues like the TV and sponsorship deal and the resignation of our joint-secretary (Mamun) in the meeting and if there is no satisfactory outcome then I will definitely think about my resignation," he said.

Titoo also expressed his dissatisfaction at the manner in which Asghar handled certain things over the last one month.

"There is an elected committee in the board and I think nothing should be passed or accepted bypassing the executive committee. I don't know whether president

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Setback for Sourav

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Sourav Ganguly's hopes of making a comeback hit a roadblock over the weekend after the former Indian captain was dismissed twice without scoring in a first-class domestic match.

The left-hander fell to another discard, Zaheer Khan, both times -- clean bowled in the first innings and leg-before first ball in the second -- during the Duleep Trophy final between East Zone and West Zone in Ahmedabad.

It was hardly the performance the selectors were expecting from Ganguly ahead of next month's three home

Tests against Sri Lanka.

Ganguly, dogged by poor form, injury and a public row with coach Greg Chappell, was axed as captain last month and replaced by Rahul Dravid for two one-day series against Sri Lanka and South Africa.

Dravid enhanced his claims for a longer tenure after India crushed the Sri Lankans 6-1. They start as favourites against South Africa in the five-match series which begins on Wednesday.

Ganguly, India's most successful Test captain with 21 wins and 5,066 runs in 84 Tests behind him, was expected to return as skipper or purely as a batsman for the first Test against Sri Lanka in Chennai from December 2.

Chairman of selectors Kiran More was non-committal on Ganguly's future.

"We have not written off Sourav or anyone else," More told AFP. "We are only looking at runs and wickets from the contenders and how they will contribute to the team."

"The message is loud and clear. Attitude and performance are critical." Ganguly received support from an unexpected quarter as former Sri Lanka captain Arjuna Ranatunga jumped to the left-hander's defence.

"India must learn to respect its heroes lest they look like pirates who can only destroy a legacy," Ranatunga wrote in his column for the Press Trust of India.

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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Dear Readers

As The Daily Star approaches its 15th anniversary, the Star Sport team would like to know your feedback on how to make the pages more attractive. So, for the next two weeks send us your suggestions, comments and even criticisms within 200-250 words to sports@thedailystar.net. We intend to publish them and wish your valuable views will enrich your favourite pages. The last date for submission of your comments is November 15.

-- Sports Editor

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